Colony of Seychelles.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOR THE

YEAR 1925

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Chapter 1.

General Remarks.

During 1925 there was no change in the routine work of the Department, except that the Director visited Farquhar Islands in July ; St Pierre, Astove and Assumption in August and September; he was afterwards absent on leave from the Colony for a period of one month. During his absence the Inspector of Schools and Acting Clerk to Governor kindly consented to act for him.

The duties of the Director of Agriculture mainly consist of running a Botanic Station and distributing economic plants ; upkeeping several small gardens in the town of Victoria, ; re-afforesting slowly the Crown lands above the Nid Reservoir; exploiting a small timber reserve at Félicité and other Crown lands; advising planters and investigating diseases affecting coconut and other palms and examining and reporting on applications from planters to obtain financial aid by means of crop privilege and mortgage loans. He is also Superintendent of the Excise Department which deals with sugar cane plantations, Bacca mills and shops, and essential oil distilleries.

Much assistance was given to planters in the way of Crop Privilege loans (Ordinance No. 9 of 1923) and Mortgage loans (Ordinance No. 4 of 1904). During the year 33 applications were received under Ordinance No. 9 of 1923, 10 of which were granted to the amount of Rs 8,500. 13 applications were received under Ordinance No. 4 of 1904 of which 5 were granted to the amount of Rs 43,000. The effect of these loans was immediately felt not only as regards the clearing and manuring of estates, but the rate of interest exacted by the few capitalists of the Colony immediately fell from 12% and over to 9 or 8%.

Chapter II.

Expenditure, Receipts, Sale of Produce.

		Rs	c.
Receipts from plantations		342	52
Sale of timber from Crown Lands		6,546	88
Rent of Crown Lands and buildings		23,075	37
Total Receipts		29,964	77

The total expenditure under Agriculture and Crown Lands amounted to Rs 14,795.24 as compared with Rs 16,510.22 in 1924 and Rs 24,179.46 in 1923.

Chapter III.

The Vanilla Industry.

The export of vanilla beans during 1925 amounted to 2,466 kilogs or 5,443 lbs as compared with 1,429 kilogs for 1924 and 692 kilogs for 1923.

The price of that article which remained so high for 4 years until the middle of 1925 viz., 35 to 45/- a lb suddenly dropped to 6 to 7/- a lb owing to speculation and overproduction. The exports from Madagascar and dependencies during the same period reached 1,214,292 lbs and 176,368 lbs from Reunion.

At the present low price is does not pay to grow vanilla in Seychelles but as this orchid takes 3 to 4 years to come into bearing, and as the planters of this colony are so much experienced in its culture and preparation, it is hoped that the extensive plantations made recently when the price was high will not be given up. The example of Reunion should be followed where vanilla is grown steadily in rotation with sugar cane and where that article has acquired such a good reputation that it is always readily sold at top prices. The same rotations with perfume plants should be adopted in Seychelles. Although old vanilla vines are susceptible to root disease more than young ones, yet prices are not likely to remain low for many years and one good crop gives enough profit for the maintenance of several acres of land under vanilla. The period during which vanilleries can remain resistant to the root disease is lengthened by applications of mulch obtained from Albizzia Moluccana leaves and distillery residues.

Chapter IV.

The Coconut Industry.

The coconut crop for 1925 largely exceeded the record crop for 1924.

The crop for the last 3 years may be apportioned as follows :—

	1923	1924	1925
Nuts converted into coprah...	24,325,000	26,705,000	32,200,000
„ „ „ oil ...	619,200	377,884	259,992
„ „ „ soap ...	135,842	16,975	...
„ exported as such ...	208,925	177,884	61,000
„ consumed locally ...	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000
Total ...	29,288,957	31,277,743	36,520,992

It is estimated that the amount of coprah exported in 1925 reached 4,600 tons or 800 tons more than in 1924. The customs returns show an exportation of 4,838 tons in 1925 but 600 tons of this amount, exported on the 5th January, belongs to the previous year's crop and a balance of about 400 tons still remained unexported at the end of the year.

There is reason to hope that the crop for 1926 will even be better than in 1925 owing to abundant rains. The rainfall in 1923 and 1924 was not above the average (100 inches) but in 1925 the total rainfall reached 139 inches and, except in June during which 1·16 inch fell, there was not a single month of the year wi hout at least 5 inches of rain. Besides abundant rains the coconut plantations largely benefited from trenching and manuring. Walling in the trees and terracing are also being widely adopted. The hardpan on the coral plateaux is also broken through and the pieces of sandstone removed should serve to wall in the trees on the granitic hillsides. As the hardpan contains often a little phosphate besides lime such a procedure would go far to improve the granitic soils of the Colony as far as a coconut culture is concerned.

More care is bestowed on the treatment of diseases and, except as regards scale insects, no apprehension on that account was felt during the year under review. Cases of little leaf disease, budrot and bleeding stem are not so commonly met with and the melitomma beetle is effectively controlled by the walling in and earthing up of the stem bases from which the insect cannot escape. These beetles breed only in coconut stem bases and nowhere else ; it is therefore a simple matter to exterminate them. There is however still a considerable amount of work to be done in this direction.

Chapter V.

The Essential Oil Industry.

The industry of essential oil distillation is progressing satisfactorily and the quantity of various oils exported during the year largely exceeded the exports for the previous year.

	1924.	1925.
Cinnamon leaf oil	32,216 litres	42,241 litres
Cinnamon bark oil	140 „	19 „
Patchouli oil	1,025 „	551 „
Basilic oil	144 „	69 „
Lemon grass oil	79 „	71 „
Clove oil	1,025 „	3,800 „

Experiments are well under way concerning the production on estate scale of Palmarosa oil and of Ginger oil from ginger roots and peppermint, lately introduced through the instrumentality of Kew Gardens. With such a series of different perfume plants, our position has been strengthened in the event of cinnamon leaf oil not finding a ready market. The profit made during the last years by distilling cinnamon leaf has allowed the old factories built up during the war with all kinds of receptacles being in many cases replaced by modern stills of which 6 of a large type were erected during the year under review.

Nothing since 1909 has been more beneficial to the Colony than the establishment of cinnamon leaf oil distilleries. Cinnamon is a jungle plant scattered about all over Mahé and the industry emerged from the experimental stage just at a time when the vanilla market was glutted. Planters soon became experts in the distillation of the leaves and now they are in a position to adopt more complicated methods of distillation as applied to other plants. Furthermore the residue is used as a manure and had of necessity to be broadcasted in coconut plantations in order to avoid the rhinoceros beetle breeding in it. The effect of this mulching in coconut plantations was like magic and it paved the way for the manuring of estates which is now generally adopted, and none too soon.

The new perfume plants are doing well. Patchouli is very successful in leaf mould from distilleries under coconut shade. The price for that article is not steady but as the leaves are slightly fermented and then dried in the shade in much the same way as tobacco leaf is dried, distillation can take place when prices are remunerative. The distillation itself is very simple and is readily done in cinnamon leaf oil distilleries, the output per ton of dried leaves amounting to 50–60 litres.

Ginger roots belong to two varieties, one with yellow and the other with white roots. They were originally introduced from India and Mauritius and the yellow roots are preferred. It is unfortunate that ginger roots were not obtained from Jamaica where the varieties have been much improved. We shall have to produce our own varieties in time.

Palmarosa oil has already been distilled on two estates and the amount of geraniol found in one sample sent to England for valuation was very favourably reported upon (93 o/o.) This plant grows very well in many localities such as Silhouette but seems less hardy in places where the soil is worn out.

Peppermint from cuttings which for several years was so difficult to obtain was at last secured for the colony by the Director of Kew Gardens and the first batch of plants have already been reproduced at a rapid rate from cuttings. There is every reason to believe that the wet and hot climate of this colony will be favourable to the growth of this plant, many of its congeners doing well in most gardens even when coral sand abounds in the soil. It is however likely to be attacked by caterpillars as other plants of the same genus are in Seychelles.

Vetivert roots were submitted to the Imperial Institute for investigation and after considerable trouble and experiments it was found that the oil from these roots did not separate readily from the mother liquor except by costly chemical processes which are out of question in Seychelles. This oil is distilled very simply in the Colony of Reunion but I am informed that in that Colony the roots are grown and distilled above 1,800 feet elevation. It is possible and even probable that at high altitudes, which do not occur in Seychelles, the oil from the roots separate more easily during distillation.

Chapter VI.

The rubber enterprise.

4,936 kilogs or 10,895 lbs of rubber were exported during 1925. The price of this article was unexpectedly high during the whole year and there is no reason, according to the authorities, to anticipate that a fall in price will soon occur so long as the influence of the restriction scheme is felt. The production of rubber in the Empire has fallen from 80 to 57 o/o of the world production under the scheme and the result is that the commodity is selling at a much higher price than the cost of production. The London stocks have been largely depleted and it will take some time to replenish it.

Rubber grows very well in Seychelles and when it is grown by small holders, it does not cost more than 30 cents of a rupee to produce locally a lb of rubber worth Rs. 1.25.

The patches of good soil suitable for rubber are too far distant from one another for the working of large rubber estates. The situation of small holders is different.

With a small crop of 200 lbs per acre the margin of profit is high enough to warrant such a simple industry when once established being maintained. Nothing justified the wholesale cutting, except on half a dozen estates, of rubber trees in the colony but this was done owing to the dearth of firewood for the working of distilleries. Rubber is a valuable article which occupies a small bulk in proportion to its value and this consideration alone justified the rubber enterprise receiving better treatment in such an out of the way place as Seychelles where questions of freight and shipment are such a handicap.

Chapter VII.

Insect notes.

Much trouble was experienced during 1925 by scale insects in coconut plantations where the diseases caused by other organisms are a mere *bagatelle* in comparison with the damage done by these coccids. A map was drawn showing the infected localities which stretch all over Mahé: the infestation however varies according to localities. On the low plateaux and low lying districts the trouble is small but on the ridges and moist mountain sides the scale insects occur in an epidemic stage. There are a great many coccids attacking coconut leaves but among

them there is one which gives a yellow colouring to the attacked leaves while the results of the attack of the others are less perceptible from a distance. The insect giving a yellow and sickly appearance to the palms is pinnaspis buxi, while the others which give no less trouble but are less conspicuous from a distance are :—

Ischnaspis filiformis	Mytilaspis sp.
Aspidiotus ficus	Chionaspis inday
,, lataniæ	,, dilatata
,, dictyospermi	Lecanium tesselatum
,, ansei	Vinsonia stellifera.
,, tribolitiformis	

On several former occasions the Aspidiotus scales, especially A. ficus were found to cause great damage to the coconut plantations but these insects are now less and less troublesome every year and seem to disappear from infected groves by some sort of migration while remaining here and there in a spasmodic stage in the colony. It is just the same now with Pinnaspis buxi which in some localities on the hill sides here and there assumes an epidemic stage which is disquieting while in other localities it seems not to go beyond a spasmodic stage, even disappearing as suddenly as it appeared.

It has escaped from the coconut palms to several other palms and occurred formerly on Vacoa trees (Pandanus Hornei and utilis). When it occurs in the epidemic stage the palms present a most sickly appearance and stop bearing, hardly any leaves escaping from the injury.

An Ordinance to combat this and other scales by giving power to enforce palliative measures such as burning the leaves and flaming the trees was passed and it is being enforced especially in the localities where the insect occurs in an epidemic stage. In some cases these measures of destruction had been voluntarily and successfully adopted. Planters naturally look askance at these compulsory measures, for flaming a coconut tree in full bearing means the annihilation of the crop for several years. When the cutting of the attacked leaves is done it is found also difficult to compel planters to cut down at the same time the flowers stalks and young nuts that are infected. In the majority of cases in which the treatment by fire is adopted there are enough scale insects left on the trees after treatment to cause the locality to be re-infected. Although this measure is therefore a palliative it has been enforced because there are many estates where cleaning the dirt has never been done and because in the long run it will become a routine work on all estates for the eventual eradication of a new outbreak of scale insects. Destruction by fumigation and spraying is out of question in coconut groves where the ground is extremely rocky. A certain amount of judgment has however to be exercised in applying such drastic measures of destruction when an insect is known to disappear naturally under the influence of natural parasites or by a migratory instinct, perhaps caused by climatic variations.

When these measures of destruction are adopted in badly infested localities planters are advised to dig trenches to prevent soil wash and permit storage of rain water and to manure their palms because it is well known in the Colony that many other scale insects disappear after the manurial treatment of the trees. It is the opinion of many authorities that scale insects attack palms only when there is something wrong in the soil of the plantations attacked. Even in Seychelles it is evident that the yellow scales are affecting plantations made in poor soil more than others and therefore that the degree of infestation is connected with the proper treatment of plantations. The occurrence of this insect on their estates is more and more awakening the planters of this colony to the absolute necessity of manuring their plantations.

Already cattle manure is purchased ; seaweed is collected on the beach and even on the reefs and phosphatic guano, ash and nitrate of Potash are used. The ground is trenched and terraced and the bases of the trunks that are too much exposed by erosion are walled in. The residue from the distilleries is becoming so difficult to get from outside that most estate owners are now putting up a distillery of their own to secure this excellent manure. These are satisfactory signs of awakening and will most decidedly go further to keep the scale insects under control than many other measures of eradication.

A clause was included in the Ordinance by which it is now forbidden to transport articles of food from Mahé to another island in those baskets of coconut leaves known under the name of "kapatia", Mahé having been declared an infected area. It is to my knowledge that many outlying islands have been infested by scale insects in that way.

Among other insects of importance the rhinoceros beetle and the melitomma beetle are less troublesome than formerly, the first owing to all dead logs of wood in which the insect breeds having been used as fuel in the distilleries, the second because many palms all over the colony are walled in and earthed up to cover the exposed adventitions roots where the melitomma usually deposits its eggs. On the other hand the necessity of getting fuel for distilleries has caused a deforestation which to my mind is not without influence on the spreading of scale insects, a lofty and wide block of forest trees being in many cases an excellent belt thus interfering with the spreading of many insects which are wind blown. Fortunately great activity is being shown, as reported elsewhere, in the planting of trees all over the colony owing to the dearth of firewood.

Chapter VIII.

Mycological notes.

Much valuable information was as usual received from the Imperial Bureau of Mycology with reference to our parasitic fungi and others. The trouble experienced in coconut plantations is not worse than last year and it is clear that so long as the present environmental conditions prevail, our plantations will remain resistant to the attack of the dreaded phytophthora fungus which sometimes is the cause of budrot. The following principal fungi were identified by Dr Butler :—

A. Phytophthora palmivora on coconut
B. Eurobium herbariorum „ „
C. Schizophllum comiuune „ „
D. Diplodia epicocos „ „
E. Glomerella cingulata on vanilla
F. Zygosporium orchoeides „
G. Fomes lividus casuarina
H. Hexagona hirta „
I. Ganoderma mastoporum „

Besides A. already mentioned, and E. which is a well known parasite on a great number of plants, none of the other fungi are parasitic as far as is known at present, they being saprophytes.

The entomogenous fungi like Cephalosporium lecanii are doing excellent work in this humid country by keeping under control Lecanium viride, lecanium tesselatum, lecanium mangiferium and Ceroplastes rubens. Without it, it would be difficult to grow coffee, lime, oranges, which are attacked by lecanium viride or cinnamon and coconut which are attacked by lecanium tesse atum. A few other fungi like microcera, Spherostylbe, fusarium, hypocrella are also efficient in keeping down scale insects.

Chapter IX.

Fisheries.

The following articles were exported during the year under review :—

	Quantity.		Declared value.	
Guano	8,208	tons	Rs	191,070
Calipee	5,641	kilogs	„	12,964
Tripangs	4,706	„	„	4,366
Shark fins	647	„	„	500
Turtle oil	6,000	litres	„	2,800

A new Ordinance, (No. 5 of 1925) was passed giving power to Government to regulate the fishing of turtles and carets and to declare, if necessary, a close season in order to avoid these reptiles being destroyed. It has been found by experience that there are certain seasons during which the two species of turtles come and lay their eggs on the shores of the numerous islands of this archipelago. By overfishing these animals are driven away to other shores. It is however not well known to what extent and under what direction the reptiles in question migrate from one place to another inside and outside the archipelago and what is their principal food. It has unfortunately not been possible to obtain accurate information regarding the life history of these reptiles as elsewhere their habits appear to be even less known than in the Seychelles. The forthcoming visit of Mr James Hornell will no doubt give us an opportunity of getting expert advice on these and other questions in relation to fisheries.

Chapter X.

Crown Lands.

An attempt towards reafforestation was made when pieces of land were acquired in 1910 by the Government, mostly by way of exchange, in order to place under control the central ridges of Mahé and the sources of rivers that arise thereform. A small number of labourers are employed in this locality and already some blocks have been reafforested but progress is slow for four years ago these summits were leased for a period of six years for the working of cinnamon trees which were centenarians and which from a large part (50o/o at least) of the jungle. Much denudation took place in consequence and the result is that reeds and bracken ferns have spread over a larger area than before and have to be destroyed in order to replace the land of these mountains under a proper canopy of forest trees. Bracken ferns (Gleichenia dichotoma) are very troublesome in this wet country ; they are not only very difficult to eradicate but the thick mattress of their dead aerial roots and stems chokes the seedlings of forest trees which are thus prevented from growing.

Enough experience has now been acquired for the proper reafforestation of these mountain sides which in central Mahé cover 1,500 acres of land and the matter is receiving attention. There are no reservoirs in the Colony and the regulating of mountain streams is therefore of more importance here than elsewhere.

Among trees that have been found to be successful the following may be mentioned :—

1. Sang dragon (pterocarpus indicus) with an undergrowth of cocoplum (Chrysobolanus icaco) in old beds and banks of rivulets that have run dry.

2. Albizzia Moluccana and Parkia Roxburghii which reach 6 feet girth in 15 years where the soil is favourable to their growth. The former (Albizzia Moluccana) is self sown and the light pods are scattered about by the wind to great distances. This tree also mixed with cocoplum produces a layer of humus in a very short time.

3. Melia dubia has been found to be much better than the other lilacs (Melia Azedarach and Azedarachta indica). It branches at a greater height and grows much quicker.

4. Gum Copal (Trachylobium verrucosum) is extremely hardy but when it grows in poor soil it branches too near the ground. The ripe fruits are unfortunately destroyed by rats.

5. Bois de Table (Heritiera littoralis) although prefering marshy and low lying grounds have been found to grow well alongside river banks.

6. Agati (Adenanthera pavonina) gives an excellent timber when it is grown in rocky ground.

7. Takamaka (Calophyllum inophyllum) is out of place on mountain ridges owing to slow growth, but it is the plant indicated for reafforesting coral plateaux.

8. Badamier (Terminalia catappa) also prefers low lying and coral grounds.

Terminalia Benjoin of Mauritius has just been experimented with on the hills and seems to grow better than T. Catappa.

9. Gayac (Afzelia bijuga) is nearly extinct in the colony. Among the slow growing indigenous trees it is by far the best or perhaps the only one to grow now-a-days. The pods are unfortunately destroyed by a caterpillar and seeds have had to be received from elsewhere. A small consignment of seeds was received from the Chagos last year. The other hard wood timbers: Capucin, Bois de natte and Bois de fer no longer thrive in our poor and exposed soils. Capucin of 40 years planted between clove trees at La Misère are smaller than a man's thigh.

10. Bois d'Olive (Elœodendron orientale) from Mauritius has made very slow growth on our hillsides and is not to be recommended.

11. Among the conifers: Araucarias and Cryptomerias do better than Pine trees including Pinus sinensis which was a failure.

12. Clove does well only in good soil and it has to be manured elsewhere. It is of very slow and straggling growth not forming thick bushes in the young age as in cooler countries.

13. Cinnamon is certainly one of the best plants for reafforesting mountain ridges. The thick leaves and hardy nature of this plant soon forms a desirable canopy to keep down weeds and ferns but it is unfortunately an economic plant and the temptation to lease crown lands covered with it is very great when there is a financial depression in the colony. For this reason it seems preferable to plant a certain number of plants producing poor timber and poor firewood rather than good timber trees which would perhaps be felled prematurely when money is needed in the Treasury.

14. Cedar (Casuarina equisetifolia) does well where the soil is not too wet or worn out. In poor laterite it has to be manured to get a good start. Manuring with cattle manure is much better than sea weeds which give poor results.

15. Eucalyptus tereticornis or the so-called hybrid of Mauritius is the gum tree that is hitherto the most successful. Eucalyptus globulus, alba, amygdalina, robusta and citriodora grow much more slowly. Eucalyptus tereticornis trees of 12 year's growth have reached 60 to 70 feet and have already been sold to provide masts for schooners.

16. Tecoma leucoxylon (Calice du Pape) is a very hardy tree which grows well even in sea water but it is of slow growth on the mountain ridges where the soil is worn out. It is included in the list of plants which are successful in the colony for reafforestation purposes.

17. Bois Noir (Albizzia Lebbek) this is another useful tree which is disappearing from the jungle. It used to grow into large trees which were big enough to be turned into coconut mills and its timber ranked next to Capucin and Takamaka at one time. The remaining few trees are stunted and gnarled but are still used for making staves for cart wheels. As cabinet wood its reputation is unsurpassed. This species reached fair dimensions in good soil only in the low country. It is so particular in its soil requirements that the value of the land in a given locality can be gauged by the way in which a bois noir grows on it.

18. Bois Rouge (Wormia ferruginea) is a slow growing tree which formerly occupied a large part of the jungle but it is nearly extinct in Mahé although still common at Praslin. Young trees are used as rafters and posts and when once cut down they put forth stump suckers readily. Older trees are turned into planks which are much appreciated as boards and for cabinet wood. An attempt towards restocking suitable portions of Government forests with it is worth experimenting with.

In the Praslin group the Crown lands consist of Félicité and Curieuse measuring 700 and 900 acres respectively, are planted all over in coconuts and leased at high prices.

Savoie, New Come, Pointe Chevalier, and Pointe Zanguilles which were abandoned pieces of land are also leased to neighbouring proprietors and in which coconut and vanilla are grown on a small scale. These 4 portions of land measure altogether about 350 acres and are leased at about Rs 75 each per annum.

The reserves of Fond Boffay, Marie Louise and Fond Ferdinand measuring 80 acres are the portions of land in which there are still coco-de-mer growing under natural conditions. They form at present the only remains of the crown lands of Praslin which were exchanged for Hermitage estate in 1919.

The reserves of Marie Louise and Fond Ferdinand are leased for the right of collecting coco-de-mer nuts. As the surrounding localities are now private estates more or less deforested I consider that the environmental conditions favourable to the natural growth of the coco-de-mer palms are handicapped. The same remark applies to Fond Boffay reserve which is too small for the preservation of the palms. This portion is however not leased and it is proposed to allow it to revert into a thick jungle. The coco-de-mer valleys at Fond Ferdinand and Marie Louise are very closely inspected for the preservation of the palms which are still a wonderful sight, but these valleys are hardly known locally as there is no road leading to them from the inhabited centres of Bay Ste Anne and Grand'Anse.

All the outlying islands Aldabra, Cosmoledo, Assumption, Astove, African banks, Marie Louise, De Neufs, Boudeuse, Etoile, Remire and other small islets are leased.

During the year under review the following trees were set out at Niol and Hermitage :—

1,329 Casuarina equisetifolia
509 Cocoplum (Chrysobolanus icaco)
50 Sang dragon (Pterocarpus indicus)
50 Gum Copal (Trachylobium verrucosum)
119 Benjoin (Terminalia benjoin)
106 Calice du Pape (Tecoma leucoxylon)
388 Agati (Adenanthera pavonina)
246 Parkia Roxburghii
36 Bois de Table (Heritiera littoralis)
559 Eucalyptus tereticornis
96 Sandoricum radiatum (Santol)
12 Flamboyants (Ponciania regia)
20 Afzelia bijuga (Gayac)

The sale of timber and firewood amounted to Rs 6,546.88 during the year. This is a much larger amount than usual although most of the timber and firewood was supplied to other departments at practically cost price.

Chapter XI.

Excise Department.

Early in 1924 the Director of Agriculture was appointed Excise Superintendent with a staff of one Excise Inspector and two Excise guards one of whom (whose duties were to inspect and measure sugar cane plantations) however remained in the service of the Public Works Department to which the work of the Excise Department was previously entrusted.

The question of regulating the sale of bacca, a beverage obtained by fermentation of sugar cane juice, has occupied the attention of the Government for a very long time. In 1925 the following new steps were taken by which the position was ameliorated.

(1) The number of licensed premises for the sale of bacca was limited and placed within a short distance from Police Stations.

(2) Bacca tenders for the privilege of selling bacca by retail in licensed shops to be situated within specified areas expressly denominated were called for and in deciding the question as to whom the tender for each district be given, persons of known bad character were rejected and eliminated. From 73 the number of retail shops was reduced to 37 and the half-yearly license fee was raised from Rs 60 to Rs 90 (Notice No. 93 of 1923).

(3) Bacca shop keepers had to comply to new regulations. The tax for the possession of a mill used for the purpose of manufacturing bacca was raised from Rs 10 to Rs 100. (Notice No. 92 of 1923). The number of mills registered fell at once from 59 to 33.

(4) The import duty on articles with which bacca manufacturers were in the habit of sophisticating bacca, viz : sugar, other than refined and sugar candy, was raised from Rs 2 to Rs 75 per 100 kilogs and a duty of Rs 75 per 100 kilogs was levied on molasses which used to be imported from Mauritius (Notice No. 91 of 1923).

The total area under sugar cane cultivation for which a license of Rs 250 per acre under Ordinance No. 15 of 1917 has to be taken, amounted in 1924 to 41 8/10ths acres and 752 square feet and it was distributed as follows :—

	Acres.	Square feet.
North Mahé and Central District ...	23 1/10th	706
South Mahé District	14 7/10ths	4104
Praslin	3	3512
La Digue...	0 8/10ths	1516

Sugar cane culture extended over 58 acres in 1922 and 46 in 1923.

The number of bacca mills registered during the year amounted to 33 and 37 licences were issued to retailers of bacca while 215 licences were issued in 1922 and 73 in 1925.

The Revenue derived from the taxes and licences amounted to :—

Sugar cane plantations Rs 250 per acre ...	Rs	10,465	04
Bacca mills licensed Rs 100	„	3,300	00
Bacca shops licenses „ 180	„	6,660	00
Tenders for licenses	„	7,491	00
Total Rs ...		27,916	04

The Excise Inspectors were also in charge of the essential oil distilleries which number 42 and for which licences are issued to the amount of ... ... Rs ... 2,520.00

In 1925 the total area under sugar cane cultivation amounted to 39 acres 4/10ths and 4,176 square feet apportioned as follows :—

	Acres.	Square feet.
North Mahé and Central District	21 8/10ths	802
South Mahé	14 1/10th	3488
Praslin and La Digue	3 4/10ths	4429

The number of bacca mills registered during the year amounted to 26 divided as follows :—

North Mahé and Central District	14
South Mahé ...	9
Praslin and La Digue ...	3

The number of licenses to retailers of bacca was reduced to 38 of which :—

21 were granted in North Mahé
12 „ „ „ South Mahé
5 „ „ „ Praslin and La Digue

The essential oil distilleries numbered 40.

The Revenue derived from taxes and licences amounted to :—

Sugar cane plantations Rs 250 per acre	Rs	9,933	52
Bacca mills licensed at „ 100	„	2,600	00
Bacca shops licensed at „ 180	„	6,840	00
Essential oil distilleries licensed at Rs 60 ...	„	2,400	00
Total Receipts ...		21,773	52

P. R. DUPONT,
Director of Agriculture.

20th March 1926.